

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 are pending in the application. Claims 11-15 and 17-23 were withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to non-elected species. Claims 1-10, 16, and 24-31 were examined in the Office Action of 11/16/2004.

Claims 1 and 2 were objected to because of certain informalities. Claims 1 and 2 have been amended to overcome the claim objections. The amendments are fully supported by the specification as originally filed.

The drawings have been amended to add the legend "PRIOR ART" to FIG. 32. No new matter is added. Approval of the replacement drawing sheet is respectfully requested.

It is noted that FIG. 1 relates to the Applicants' claimed invention, e.g., as described on pages 34-36 of the specification. FIG. 1 was discussed in the Background section of the application only for the purpose of explaining FIG. 32 (see, e.g., page 3, last paragraph). Therefore, it would not be appropriate to label FIG. 1 as prior art.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 9, and 16 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,563,478 to Aoki (hereinafter "Aoki"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

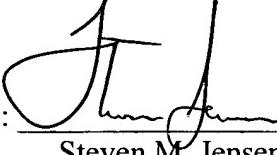
Enclosed herewith is an English-language translation of Japanese Application 2000-067585 ("the '585 application"), filed on March 10, 2000, to which the present application claims priority. Rejected claims 1, 2, 5, 9, and 16 are fully described and enabled by the '585 application (see English-language translation). Also, the '585 application has an earlier filing date (March 10, 2000) than the filing date of the Aoki reference (November 30, 2000). Under MPEP 706.02(b), because Applicants have filed an English-language translation of the priority document, and thus perfected a foreign priority claim under 35 USC 119 to the '585 application, the Aoki reference does not qualify as prior art under 35 USC 102(e).

As explained above, Applicants have perfected a priority claim to the '585 application, which has an earlier filing date than the Aoki reference. The priority document satisfies the enablement and written description requirements of 35 USC 112, first paragraph; therefore, the Aoki reference is not prior art to the present application.

It is believed that the claims are in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendments to the drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to FIG. 32, where the legend "PRIOR ART" has been added to FIG. 32, as required in the Office Action. No new matter is added.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet